



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

APR 10 2010

Mr. Walt Senterfitt
Co-Chair
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)
80-A Fourth Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Dear Mr. Senterfitt:

Thank you for your letter requesting an update on steps the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has taken to dispel the myths, misconceptions, and misunderstandings that contribute to, and are sustained by, criminal prosecutions of HIV-infected persons for certain behaviors. CDC recognizes the risks that criminalization of HIV transmission and exposure may pose to HIV prevention programs and messages. In December 2008, CDC committed to address the misinformation that both fuels and results from the criminalization of behaviors that pose no appreciable risk of HIV transmission and exposure by undertaking five key action steps. As requested in your letter of January 10, 2010, we have provided below an outline detailing both the action steps to be taken and the anticipated dates of completion. Specifically you asked about:


1. Update and expand the "Rumors, Myths, and Hoaxes" section of the CDC website. This will be completed by April 30, 2010.
2. Update and expand CDC's factsheet and question and answer sets (Q&As) regarding HIV transmission to better address myths and misconceptions about HIV transmission. This will be completed by April 30, 2010.
3. Develop internal talking points to ensure CDC staff is equipped to deliver consistent, scientifically accurate information when they receive inquiries around issues of criminalization and/or myths and misconceptions about HIV transmission. This will be completed by April 30, 2010.
4. Survey health departments to determine whether they have collaborative relationships with criminal justice personnel and, if so, how these relationships affect HIV prevention efforts in communities. The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) will begin conducting such a survey in May 2010 among local (county and city) health departments. NACCHO routinely conducts sentinel inquiries among an established group of approximately 100 local health departments. The results from this survey will be available by July 30, 2010. In addition, CDC is currently exploring with

National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) the possibility of conducting a similar survey among state health departments.

5. Use information obtained from the surveys to develop a communications package to provide to state and local health departments with the tools and messages they need to facilitate interactions with their criminal justice counterparts. A communications package will be completed and provided to the health departments by August 30, 2010.

While these activities represent a concrete beginning, we realize there is much to be done to address the need for a public health, rather than punitive perspective to drive how people living with HIV/AIDS are approached in the United States. We all must continue to be forward thinking in this endeavor, and collectively we will make a broader impact. We at CDC appreciate the work organizations such as yours do in the communities affected by this disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin A. Fenton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kevin A. Fenton, M.D., Ph.D., F.F.P.H.
Director
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral
Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention